

### The guild of painters in the evolution of art in colonial Cusco

Valenzuela, Fernando A.

Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version  
Arbeitspapier / working paper

Zur Verfügung gestellt in Kooperation mit / provided in cooperation with:  
SSG Sozialwissenschaften, USB Köln

#### Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Valenzuela, F. A. (2010). *The guild of painters in the evolution of art in colonial Cusco*. (Workingpaper des Soziologischen Seminars, 01/2010). Luzern: Universität Luzern, Kultur- und Sozialwissenschaftliche Fakultät, Soziologisches Seminar. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-382931>

#### Nutzungsbedingungen:

Dieser Text wird unter einer Deposit-Lizenz (Keine Weiterverbreitung - keine Bearbeitung) zur Verfügung gestellt. Gewährt wird ein nicht exklusives, nicht übertragbares, persönliches und beschränktes Recht auf Nutzung dieses Dokuments. Dieses Dokument ist ausschließlich für den persönlichen, nicht-kommerziellen Gebrauch bestimmt. Auf sämtlichen Kopien dieses Dokuments müssen alle Urheberrechtshinweise und sonstigen Hinweise auf gesetzlichen Schutz beibehalten werden. Sie dürfen dieses Dokument nicht in irgendeiner Weise abändern, noch dürfen Sie dieses Dokument für öffentliche oder kommerzielle Zwecke vervielfältigen, öffentlich ausstellen, aufführen, vertreiben oder anderweitig nutzen.

Mit der Verwendung dieses Dokuments erkennen Sie die Nutzungsbedingungen an.

#### Terms of use:

This document is made available under Deposit Licence (No Redistribution - no modifications). We grant a non-exclusive, non-transferable, individual and limited right to using this document. This document is solely intended for your personal, non-commercial use. All of the copies of this documents must retain all copyright information and other information regarding legal protection. You are not allowed to alter this document in any way, to copy it for public or commercial purposes, to exhibit the document in public, to perform, distribute or otherwise use the document in public.

By using this particular document, you accept the above-stated conditions of use.

WORKING PAPER

Fernando A. Valenzuela

**The guild of painters in the evolution of art in colonial  
Cusco**





Fernando A. Valenzuela

## **The guild of painters in the evolution of art in colonial Cusco**

Workingpaper des Soziologischen Seminars 01/2010  
Soziologisches Seminar der Universität Luzern  
Juni 2010

### **Kontakt:**

Dr. Fernando A. Valenzuela  
Departamento de Sociología de la Universidad Alberto Hurtado  
Cienfuegos 46  
Santiago  
Chile

Copyright by the author(s)  
Review: Prof. Dr. Cornelia Bohn

---

ISSN gedruckt: 1663-2532; online: 1663-2540

**Downloads:** [www.unilu.ch/sozsem](http://www.unilu.ch/sozsem)

Universität Luzern  
Kultur- und Sozialwissenschaftliche Fakultät  
Soziologisches Seminar  
Kasernenplatz 3  
Postfach 7455  
CH-6000 Luzern 7

T +41 41 228 79 37  
F +41 41 228 73 77



## The guild of painters in the evolution of art in colonial Cusco

*Abstract:* This article aims at reappraising the role of the painters' guild in the evolution of art in colonial Cusco by critically assessing the theory proposed by José de Mesa and Teresa Gisbert, according to which the Indian painters' separation from this organization in the last decades of the seventeenth century caused the emergence of a local school of painting. Based mainly on an analysis of the sources used by these authors and on Francisco Quiroz's research on the situation of guilds in colonial Lima, it is argued that, whereas Indian painters might effectively have separated themselves from the painters' guild of Cusco around 1688, the historical narration constructed by Mesa and Gisbert erroneously assumes that this organization effectively enforced, before its split, ordinances similar to the ones approved for the painters' guild of Lima in 1649. Therefore, one should not assume that this event had decisive consequences in the evolution of art in this region. This article further argues that, by integrating Francisco Stastny's characterization of colonial peripheries and Niklas Luhmann's conceptualization of art as a form of communication, both the stylistic and the institutional histories of art in this region during the colonial period can be given account for as responding to a more encompassing societal context in terms of a non-differentiated art form characteristic of colonial peripheries.

### Keywords

colonial art – Cusco – guild – Mesa and Gisbert – social systems - sociology of art

### Introduction

In 1982, José de Mesa and Teresa Gisbert published the second edition of their most influential work, *Historia de la Pintura Cuzqueña*.<sup>1</sup> Compared with the first edition from twenty years before,<sup>2</sup> this version presented one major modification in the comprehension of the social context that supported the emergence of the Cusco school of painting and of

---

\* Assistant Professor at the Department of Sociology of the Universidad Alberto Hurtado, Chile. Email: [fvalenzu@uahurtado.cl](mailto:fvalenzu@uahurtado.cl), Ph.D-Thesis, University of Lucerne 2010, "Painting as a Form of Communication in Colonial Central Andes: Variations on the Form of Ornamental Art in Early World Society", Advisers: Prof. Dr. Rudolf Stichweh, Prof. Dr. Cornelia Bohn.

<sup>1</sup> José de Mesa and Teresa Gisbert, *Historia de la Pintura Cuzqueña* [Ed. 2], 2 vols., 2nd ed. (Lima: Fundación Augusto N. Wiese, Banco Wiese, 1982).

<sup>2</sup> José de Mesa and Teresa Gisbert, *Historia de la pintura Cuzqueña* [Ed. 1], 1st ed. (Bueno Aires: Instituto de Arte Americano e Investigaciones Estéticas, 1962).

other local schools in the central Andes during the “long eighteenth century” (c. 1680 – c. 1800). While the first edition put emphasis on the formation of an interregional market of religious images during the first half of the eighteenth century, the second saw this as a late event in a process that had been triggered by the separation of the Indian members from the painters' guild of Cusco in the last decades of the previous century. The main consequence of this latter event was recognized in the level of artistic style: the Indian painters' opportunity to practice this trade without Spanish or Creole supervision regarding the artistic qualities of their work would explain the absence of central perspective and chiaroscuro and the preference for decorative values that characterized the Cusco school of painting. In this context, a notarial document from 1688 that implied that the Indian painters had been allowed to separate themselves from the guild was interpreted as the birth certificate of this local artistic tradition.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, these authors interpreted the separation of the Indian members from the painters' guild as a necessary cause of the emergence of the Cusco school and, by extension, of other local schools in the Andean highlands.

Almost thirty years after its original publication, the thesis presented by José de Mesa and Teresa Gisbert is still highly influential, especially for works of synthesis and diffusion. Besides its adoption in texts published by Mesa and Gisbert until fairly recent years,<sup>4</sup> this

---

<sup>3</sup> This document from 1688 was first mentioned by Teresa Gisbert in 1981: Teresa Gisbert, “Pintores Hispanos y Pintores Indígenas en la Ciudad del Cuzco,” *El Mercurio*, November 29, 1981, sec. Artes y Letras. However, it wasn't published until 1985: Horacio Villanueva Urteaga, “Nacimiento de la escuela cuzqueña de pintura,” *Boletín del Archivo Departamental del Cuzco* 1 (1985): 11-13. According to Mesa and Gisbert, Horacio Villanueva Urteaga, then Director of the Archivo Departamental del Cuzco, had originally found this letter (Papeles sueltos, Corregimiento, Fondo Vega Centeno) and had handed it to them: Mesa and Gisbert, *Historia de la Pintura Cuzqueña* [Ed. 2], note 53. I must thank Carrol Damian, who sent me a copy of the original document and of Villanueva's transcription.

<sup>4</sup> José de Mesa and Teresa Gisbert, “El Baroco Tardío del Siglo XVIII en Perú y Bolivia,” in *Arte iberoamericano desde la colonización a la Independencia*, vol. 2, 2nd ed., Summa Artis. Historia General del Arte XIX (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1985), 551; Teresa Gisbert, “Andean Painting,” in *Gloria in excelsis : the virgin and angels in viceregal painting of Peru and Bolivia* ; Center for Inter-American Relations, New York, Nov. 12, 1985-Feb. 10, 1986; Archer M. Huntington Art Gallery, Univ. of Texas at Austin, March 23-May 4, 1986 ; Center for the Fine Arts, Miami, May 19-July 20, 1986 (New York: Center for Inter-American Relations, 1986), 26 f.; José de Mesa and Teresa Gisbert, “La pintura cuzqueña,” *Armitano Arte* 10 (1986): 88 f.; José de Mesa, “La pintura cuzqueña (1540-1821),” *Cuadernos de arte colonial* I, no. 4 (1988): 20; Teresa Gisbert, “La identidad étnica de los artistas del Virreinato del Perú,” in *El Barroco Peruano*, vol. 1, 2 vols., Arte y Tesoros del Perú (Lima: Banco de Crédito, 2002), 99-143; José de Mesa, “La influencia de Flandes en la pintura del Area Andina,” *Revista de Historia de América*, no. 117 (June 1994): 74. See also the interviews to Teresa

thesis has played a relevant role in historical narrations developed by Isabel Cruz de Amenábar,<sup>5</sup> Carol Damian,<sup>6</sup> Carolyn Dean,<sup>7</sup> María Concepción García Sáiz,<sup>8</sup> Ramón Mujica Pinilla,<sup>9</sup> and Roberto Samanez Argumedo.<sup>10</sup> More recently, it has also been echoed by Luis Eduardo Wuffarden,<sup>11</sup> Marcus Burke<sup>12</sup> and Kelly Donahue-Wallace.<sup>13</sup>

Despite its sustained influence, this thesis has only rarely been critically assessed.<sup>14</sup> This is particularly relevant regarding the key document from 1688 that has been interpreted as the birth certificate of the Cusco school of painting. I have found no critical assessments of these authors' interpretation of this document. It is also extremely rare to find references to the original document, to its transcription by Horacio Villanueva,<sup>15</sup> or to Carol

---

Gisbert included in: Raúl Goyburu, *El Barroco del Nuevo Mundo*, La Piedra de los Doce Ángulos, 2007; Francisco Vargas, *Teresa Gisbert, Una Belleza Nueva : Conversaciones con Cristián Warnken* (Santiago, Chile: MW Producciones, 2003), <http://www.unabellezanueva.org/teresa-gisbert/>.

<sup>5</sup> Isabel Cruz de Amenábar, "Imágenes y Devoción en el Virreinato Peruano," in *Arte y Sociedad en Chile 1550-1650* (Santiago: Ediciones Universidad Católica de Chile, 1986), 29, 83 ff.

<sup>6</sup> Carol Damian, "Artist and Patron in Colonial Cuzco: Workshops, Contracts, and a Petition for Independence," *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 4, no. 1 (Winter 1995): 41 f.; Carol Damian, *The virgin of the Andes : art and ritual in colonial Cuzco* (Miami Beach, Fla.: Grassfield Pr., 1995), 48.

<sup>7</sup> Carolyn Dean, "Copied Carts: Spanish Prints and Colonial Peruvian Paintings," *The Art Bulletin* 78, no. 1 (March 1996): 99, note 3.

<sup>8</sup> María Concepción García Sáiz, "Pintura y Escultura Colonial en Iberoamérica," in *Historia del Arte Iberoamericano*, ed. Ramón Gutiérrez and Rodrigo Gutiérrez Viñuales (Barcelona: Lunwerk Editores, 2000), 72-4.

<sup>9</sup> Ramón Mujica Pinilla, "Arte e identidad: las raíces culturales del barroco peruano," in *El Barroco Peruano*, vol. 1, Colección Arte y Tesoros del Perú (Lima: Banco de Crédito, 2002), 21.

<sup>10</sup> Roberto Samanez Argumedo, "Las portadas retablo en el barroco cusqueño," in *El Barroco Peruano*, vol. 1, Arte y Tesoros del Perú (Lima: Banco de Crédito, 2002), 183.

<sup>11</sup> Luis Eduardo Wuffarden, "Las Escuelas Pictóricas Virreinales," in *Perú indígena y virreinal* (SEACEX, 2005), 84.

<sup>12</sup> Marcus Burke, "The Parallel Course of Latin American and European Art in the Viceregal Era," in *The Arts in Latin America, 1492-1820*, ed. Joseph J. Rishel and Suzanne L. Stratton, 2006, 78.

<sup>13</sup> Kelly Donahue-Wallace, *Art and Architecture of Viceregal Latin America, 1521-1821* (UNM Press, 2008), 140.

<sup>14</sup> As we shall see, an exception is provided by María Concepción García Sáiz's discussion of the distinction between European and Andean styles, as it may be applied to paintings from the Viceroyalties of New Spain and Peru. María Concepción García Sáiz, "Aproximaciones conceptuales sobre la pintura colonial hispano-americana," in *Pintura, escultura y artes útiles en Iberoamérica, 1500-1825*, ed. Ramón Gutiérrez, Manuales Arte Cátedra (Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra, 1995), 83-100.

<sup>15</sup> Villanueva Urteaga, "Nacimiento de la escuela cuzqueña de pintura."



Damian's translation from 1995.<sup>16</sup> After this date, texts that have adopted this thesis either continue to mention Mesa and Gisbert as their only source or omit to cite their sources completely. As a result, these authors' historical narration has become a fact.

This article attempts to reappraise the role of the painters' guild in the evolution of art in colonial Cusco by critically assessing Mesa and Gisbert's argumentation. Based mainly on an analysis of the sources used by these authors and on Francisco Quiroz's research on the situation of guilds in colonial Lima,<sup>17</sup> it argues that, whereas Indian painters might effectively have separated themselves from the painters' guild of Cusco around 1688, the historical narration constructed by Mesa and Gisbert erroneously assumes that this organization effectively enforced, before its split, ordinances similar to the ones approved for the painters' guild of Lima in 1649. In this situation, it is advisable to adopt the null hypothesis – i.e. that this event didn't have decisive consequences in the evolution of art in this region. This article further argues that, by integrating Francisco Stastny's characterization of colonial peripheries<sup>18</sup> and Niklas Luhmann's conceptualization of art as a form of communication,<sup>19</sup> both the stylistic and the institutional histories of art in this region during the colonial period can be given account for as responding to a more encompassing societal context.

The argumentation is organized in four sections. A first one presents the context that gave sense to Mesa and Gisbert's interpretation of the Spanish painters' petition to the *corregidor* of Cusco (the notarial document from 1688): reassuming an old tradition in the art historical analysis of colonial paintings, these authors framed this document as a proof of the influence of indigenous populations on art. A second section distinguishes between a weak and a strong thesis regarding the stylistic consequences of the conflict that is thought to have taken place between Indian and Spanish members of the guild of painters of Cusco. A third section reviews the role of the painters' guild in this historical narration in

---

<sup>16</sup> Damian, "Artist and Patron in Colonial Cuzco: Workshops, Contracts, and a Petition for Independence"; Damian, *The virgin of the Andes : art and ritual in colonial Cuzco*.

<sup>17</sup> Francisco Quiroz, *Gremios, razas y libertad de industria : Lima colonial* (Lima: Facultad de Ciencias Sociales, Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, 1995).

<sup>18</sup> Francisco Stastny, "Arte colonial," in *El arte en el Perú: obras en la colección del Museo de Arte de Lima* (Lima: Museo de Arte de Lima, 2001), 83-126.

<sup>19</sup> Niklas Luhmann, *Art as a Social System*, trans. Eva M. Knodt, *Crossing Aesthetics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).

more detail and contrasts it against available documentation. A final section discusses Mesa and Gisbert's thesis in the light of Francisco Stastny's and Niklas Luhmann's work. It proposes that correcting Mesa and Gisbert's assumptions regarding the operations of the painters' guild of Cusco during the seventeenth century leads to a better comprehension of this period in terms of a non-differentiated art form characteristic of colonial peripheries.

## I. Signs of autochthonous sensibilities

Since their earliest publications about the Cusco school of painting, Mesa and Gisbert have framed this artistic tradition as part of a broader phenomenon that encompassed several local schools in the highlands, especially in the region surrounding lake Titicaca in Alto Peru. All these schools had abandoned the European canon at the beginning of the eighteenth century, “...para desembocar en la pintura fácil y atractiva de los maestros populares.”<sup>20</sup> Like *mestizo* architecture – a style that spread during the same period over roughly the same territory with the important exception of Cusco –, the popular schools of Andean painting put emphasis on decoration, to the point that ornamental objects (e.g. *brocados*, birds and jewelery) acquired the same value as the human figure.

The description of this form of painting in terms of a popular tradition could have been adopted by Mesa and Gisbert from the work done by Ángel Guido decades before.<sup>21</sup> According to the first edition of their *Historia...*, however, this tradition didn't develop parallel to an erudite or official one, as Guido had claimed, but as its offspring.<sup>22</sup> Also unlike Guido's work, Mesa and Gisbert omitted any reference to the influence of Amerindian cultures on colonial art. Their text focused instead on the form of production and circulation of canvases: the change from one form of art to the other – that is, from the erudite to the popular – would have been effected by workshops that participated in an interregional market of religious images.

---

<sup>20</sup> Mesa and Gisbert, *Historia de la pintura Cuzqueña* [Ed. 1], 12.

<sup>21</sup> Ángel Guido, *Redescubrimiento de América en el Arte*, 1st ed., Serie Conferencias y Textos 16 (Santa Fé: Universidad Nacional del Litoral, 1940).

<sup>22</sup> Mesa and Gisbert, *Historia de la pintura Cuzqueña* [Ed. 1], 191.

Following a tradition that goes back to Felipe Cossío del Pomar's doctoral dissertation from 1922,<sup>23</sup> Mesa and Gisbert organized this history in three epochs. A first one corresponded to the mannerist period that was initiated by the immigration of the Italian masters Bernardo Bitti (1548-1610), Mateo Pérez de Alesio (1547-c. 1616) and Angelino Medoro (1567-1633) in the last decades of the sixteenth century. In mid seventeenth century their influence diminished and gave way to the first signs of a local school of painting. While Lázaro Pardo Lagos' work (active in Cusco from c. 1628 to c. 1669)<sup>24</sup> presented the last clear traces of a strong influence by the Italian masters, Juan Espinoza de los Monteros' (active from c. 1638 to c. 1669)<sup>25</sup> was seen as marking the transition to the early exponents of the popular school of Cusco. At this point, two Indian painters are particularly relevant, for each one of them represents a different side in this transition: Basilio de Santa Cruz (active from c. 1660 to c. 1699) and Diego Quispe Tito (active from c. 1627 to c. 1681). While Santa Cruz was seen as the most important exponent of the European form of painting during his period, Quispe Tito was presented as having established the point of departure of the Cusco school of painting by inaugurating a “rebellious” and “highly original” style based on an almost literal copy of Flemish prints.<sup>26</sup> In broad terms, this local tradition was described as, “...*un conjunto de cuadros anónimos, siempre de tema religioso, las más de las veces sobredorados, con técnica de excesivo linealismo y sin perspectiva.*”<sup>27</sup> Unlike previous epochs, this last one responded to the emergence of an interregional market of religious images, with clients over a vast region that reached from Quito to Santiago de Chile.

Other texts by José de Mesa and Teresa Gisbert published during the 1960s and 1970s assumed the same chronological model and insisted on three key points. First, that the Cusco school of painting was part of a broader phenomenon – that they would later call

---

<sup>23</sup> Felipe Cossío del Pomar, “Historia Crítica de la Pintura en el Cuzco” (Tesis para optar el grado de doctor en filosofía, historia y letras, Universidad del Cuzco, 1922); Felipe Cossío del Pomar, *Pintura colonial : escuela cuzqueña* (Cuzco: Rozas, 1928).

<sup>24</sup> Martín S. Soria, “La pintura en el Cuzco y el Alto Perú 1550-1700,” *Anales del Instituto de Arte Americano e Investigaciones Estéticas* 12 (1959): 29.

<sup>25</sup> Ricardo Estabridis Cárdenas, “La Virgen entrega el rosario a Santo Domingo de Guzmán,” in *Pintura en el Virreinato del Perú*, 2nd ed., Arte y Tesoros del Perú (Lima: Banco de Crédito del Perú, 2002), 374-375.

<sup>26</sup> Mesa and Gisbert, *Historia de la pintura Cuzqueña* [Ed. 1], 12.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 185.

the Andean schools of painting.<sup>28</sup> By insisting on this point, they reinforced the dependence of this field of research on the literature on mestizo architecture. This is connected with the second point, namely that this form of painting is characterized by its lack of perspective and *chiaroscuro*, and by the achievement of a stereotypical form of beauty. As they wrote in a publication from 1968, “...*la escuela cuzqueña, poco amiga del claroscuro y deseosa de mostrar una belleza formal totalmente estereotipada. En esto y en su planismo es el paralelo más cabal de la arquitectura andina.*”<sup>29</sup> Interestingly, this style was frequently referred to as the consequence of an aesthetic decision: if not as the result of a stylistic decision in dialogue with the European tradition, at least as an aesthetic preference, and not as the mere consequence of technical insufficiency.<sup>30</sup> This is connected to a third point: these authors' increasing concern with the evidence of indigenous influences on these local schools – an issue that had been mostly neglected in the first edition of their *Historia...*, from 1962.

The question regarding the survival of pre-contact indigenous cultures in colonial art had been a pressing issue for several decades, reaching its climax around 1960 in George Kubler's publications<sup>31</sup> and in the 36<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Americanists from 1966. In the realm of painting, it had been a major focus of art historical texts based on the notion of *mestizaje*: among others, this included publications by Felipe Cossío del Pomar,<sup>32</sup> Luis Álvarez Urquieta<sup>33</sup> and Ángel Guido<sup>34</sup> during the first half of the century. In the 1950s, it had been put aside by authors that adopted the difference between artistic centers

---

<sup>28</sup> Teresa Gisbert, *Iconografía y Mitos Indígenas en el Arte* (La Paz, 1980), 104; José de Mesa and Teresa Gisbert, “Pintura virreinal en Bolivia,” *Mundo hispánico* 27, no. 318 (1974): 43.

<sup>29</sup> José de Mesa and Teresa Gisbert, “Determinantes del llamado estilo mestizo y sus alcances en América; breve consideración del término,” in *Actas y Memorias del Congreso Internacional de Americanistas XXXVII - 1966*, vol. 3 (presented at the El Barroco en América. Congreso Internacional de Americanistas XXXVII - 1966, República Argentina: Libart, 1968), 222-3. [*That is the case of the Cusco school, which disliked chiaroscuro and was eager to show a stereotypical form of beauty. In this respect and in its flatness is this school parallel to the Andean architecture.*]

<sup>30</sup> Mesa and Gisbert, “Pintura virreinal en Bolivia,” 43.

<sup>31</sup> George Kubler, “On the colonial extinction of the motifs of pre-Columbian art,” in *Essays in pre-Columbian art and archaeology*, ed. Samuel Kirkland Lothrop (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 14-34.

<sup>32</sup> Cossío del Pomar, “Historia Crítica de la Pintura en el Cuzco”; Felipe Cossío del Pomar, *Arte del Perú Colonial* (México - Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1958).

<sup>33</sup> Luis Álvarez Urquieta, *La pintura en Chile durante el período colonial* (Santiago de Chile: Dirección General de Prisiones, 1933).

<sup>34</sup> Guido, *Redescubrimiento de América en el Arte*.

and their peripheries as core analytical distinction, such as Enrique Marco Dorta<sup>35</sup> and Martin S. Soria.<sup>36</sup>

The latter's work is behind much of Mesa and Gisbert's publications from the 1960s. However, in an article from 1965 on *mestizo* architecture, Mesa and Gisbert already noted that, "*Es probable que estas diferencias con el estilo de origen se deban a un punto de vista distinto, que responde plenamente a la sensibilidad indígena.*"<sup>37</sup> A few years later, they claimed that, "*Como se ve en las formas que subsisten en la llamada arquitectura mestiza son renacentistas en general y manieristas a veces, es decir europeas, lo que deriva de la sensibilidad indígena es el arcaísmo que hace que estas formas pervivan tres siglos estatizándose sin dar lugar a un cambio sustancial.*"<sup>38</sup> They confronted this problem again in 1971, more concerned with the verifiability of their arguments: "*Para admitir que los indios empezaron a expresarse con cierta libertad en el siglo XVIII, habrá que demostrar previamente que en este siglo los nativos eran respetados como artistas.*"<sup>39</sup> They alluded in this respect to the testimonies of Bartolomé and Diego de Arzans, from 1714 and 1736 respectively, which did indeed make an argument in favor of the Indians' artistic abilities, but didn't make reference to their influence on artistic style. Nonetheless, without making reference to further documentation that could support their claim, the problem appears to have been settled by next year when Mesa and Gisbert observed that the image of the Virgin of the Candlestick carved by Francisco Tito Yupanqui around

---

<sup>35</sup> Enrique Marco Dorta, "La pintura en Colombia, Ecuador, Peru y Bolivia," in *Historia del Arte Hispanoamericano*, vol. 2, 3 vols. (Barcelona, Madrid, Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro: Salvat Editores, 1950), 443-494.

<sup>36</sup> Martin S. Soria, "Painting and sculpture in Latin America from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century," *Year Book of the American Philosophical Society* (1952): 278-281; Martin S. Soria, *La pintura del siglo XVI en Sudamérica* (Buenos Aires: Instituto de Arte Americano e Investigaciones Estéticas, 1956); Soria, "La pintura en el Cuzco y el Alto Perú 1550-1700."

<sup>37</sup> José de Mesa and Teresa Gisbert, "Renacimiento y manierismo en la arquitectura "mestiza"," *Boletín de Centro de Investigaciones Históricas y Estéticas* I, no. 3 (1965): 9-10. [*It is likely that these differences in the style of origin are due to a different point of view, which wholly corresponds to the indigenous sensibility.*]

<sup>38</sup> Mesa and Gisbert, "Determinantes del llamado estilo mestizo y sus alcances en América; breve consideración del término," 222-3. [*As it can be observed in the forms that have survived in mestizo architecture, they are generally Renaissance and seldom Mannerist, that is to say, European. What has derived from indigenous sensibility is the archaism that makes these forms last three centuries without suffering any substantial change.*]

<sup>39</sup> José de Mesa and Teresa Gisbert, "Lo indígena en el arte hispanoamericano," *Boletín de Centro de Investigaciones Históricas y Estéticas* 12 (1971): 35. [*To admit that Indians began to express themselves with a certain amount of liberty during the eighteenth century, we must first demonstrate that in that century natives were respected as artists.*]

1584 – the Virgin of Copacabana – corresponded to a peculiar form of Indigenous devotion:

Aunque Yupanqui se inspiró en una imagen española, hay que advertir que existe una gran distancia entre la Virgen de Santo Domingo que le sirvió de modelo y la de Copacabana. Esta distancia se plasma en el arcaísmo de la imagen nativa y su calidad de icono, en ella se advierte que el artista lejos de expresar el humanismo de su tiempo manifiesta una peculiar manera de arraigo indígena. La Virgen está concebida con esa distancia con que debieron ver los indígenas las cosas divinas y que proviene de los tiempos anteriores a la conquista;<sup>40</sup>

Compared to the Spanish original, Yupanqui's archaic image of Saint Mary was seen to resemble an icon: an unrealistic representation of a sacred person. And this was seen as characteristic of pre-contact indigenous religions.

In 1974, Mesa and Gisbert applied these ideas to the observation of colonial painting in the central Andes: the emergence of a mestizo style of painting during the last two decades of the seventeenth century was explained as a consequence of a greater proportion of Indians in the guilds of painters.<sup>41</sup> Interestingly, while the focus was placed in the same institution, this argument is the exact inversion of the one that would become mainstream after 1981. Meanwhile, the idea that this style corresponded to an indigenous sensibility was reinforced again in 1977<sup>42</sup> and in 1980, when Gisbert argued that the characteristics of the Andean schools were present in the Cusco school of painting, “...la cual está compuesta en más de un 70% de indios y la que tiene aceptación en todo el continente.”<sup>43</sup> While they had presented a similar claim already in 1974,<sup>44</sup> the numerical value that had

---

<sup>40</sup> José de Mesa and Teresa Gisbert, *Escultura virreinal en Bolivia* (La Paz: Academia Nacional de Ciencias de Bolivia, 1972), 83. [Even though Yupanqui based his design [for the Virgin of Copacabana] on a Spanish image, one must note the great distance that separates the Virgin of Santo Domingo, which he used as a model, and that of Copacabana. This distance can be observed in the native image's archaism and iconic character. Far from expressing the Humanist tradition of his time, the artist manifests his peculiar indigenous traditions. The Virgin has been conceived from the same distant position from where the native peoples may have seen divine things, and which comes from pre-Hispanic times.]

<sup>41</sup> Mesa and Gisbert, “Pintura virreinal en Bolivia,” 43.

<sup>42</sup> José de Mesa and Teresa Gisbert, *Holguín y la pintura virreinal en Bolivia* (La Paz: Libr. Ed. Juventud, 1977), 19.

<sup>43</sup> Gisbert, *Iconografía y Mitos Indígenas en el Arte*, 104. [...the 70% of which is composed by Indians and is popular all over the continent.]

<sup>44</sup> Mesa and Gisbert, “Pintura virreinal en Bolivia.”

been associated with it – which doesn't seem to make reference to an actual quantitative analysis – gave this claim an aura of exactitude that might trigger greater credibility.

All in all, in the first years of the 1980s, Mesa and Gisbert seemed to be looking for empirical data in which to ground their interpretation of Andean painting in terms of a *mes-tizo* tradition that was marked by the influence of Amerindian peoples. In 1981, perhaps while still preparing the second edition of their *Historia...* that was going to be published during the following year, Teresa Gisbert included a short article in the Chilean newspaper *El Mercurio* in which she announced a major finding:

...existe un documento fechado en 1688 por el que conocemos las diferencias entre los pintores españoles y los pintores indios de la ciudad incaica. Los malentendidos provocan el retiro de estos últimos, creándose dos grupos paralelos: el de los indígenas, que al parecer se dedicó exclusivamente a la pintura, y el de los españoles, que formaron un gremio común con escultores y doradores;<sup>45</sup>

This letter from 1688 was interpreted by Gisbert as the first of a series of documents that gave testimony of a gradual decay of the guild of painters of Cusco since the last decades of the seventeenth century. As part of this series, she cited a second document from 1704, through which the *Maestro Mayor* Juan Esteban Álvarez had asked the local authorities that all painters, sculptors and architects should be examined prior to their being given permission to open a shop.<sup>46</sup> She also cited documents from 1786 that suggest that there were both an *Alcalde* of painters and a *Cacique* of painters and silversmiths in the city of Cusco. The first position was occupied by Ignacio Gamarra, who, according to Ramón Gutiérrez, was also the *Maestro Mayor* of the guild.<sup>47</sup> As mentioned by José de Mesa and Teresa Gisbert, Simón de Zevallos signed a document that same year presenting himself

---

<sup>45</sup> Gisbert, "Pintores Hispanos y Pintores Indígenas en la Ciudad del Cuzco." [...there is a document dated on 1688 through which we know the differences between the Spanish painters and the Indian painters in the Inca city. The misunderstandings provoked the retirement of the later. Two parallel groups were created: that of the Indians, which seems to have dedicated itself exclusively to painting, and that of the Spaniards, who formed a shared guild with sculptures and gilders.]

<sup>46</sup> In 1982, Mesa and Gisbert cited the following document as their source in this respect: Papeles sueltos del Fondo Vega Centeno, Archivo Departamental del Cuzco. Mesa and Gisbert, *Historia de la Pintura Cuzqueña* [Ed. 2], 226.

<sup>47</sup> Ramón Gutiérrez, "Notas sobre organización artesanal en el Cusco durante la colonia," *Histórica* III, no. 1 (1979): 7. Ramón Gutiérrez cites the following document as his source: Archivo Documental de Cuzco. Archivo del Colegio de Ciencias, leg. 10, Remate de Lienzos. Designación del 21-VIII-1786).

as “*Cacique del Gremio de Plateros, Pintores...*”<sup>48</sup> For these authors, this document also suggests that the indigenous painters could have organized themselves in a separate guild after 1688. Finally, according to a document signed by José Berrío, *Maestro Mayor* of the guild of painters and sculptors of Cusco, there was no active painter left in the guild in 1810. Berrío complained that the aforementioned restriction wasn't sufficiently enforced by local authorities.<sup>49</sup> According to Mesa and Gisbert's interpretation, Indian painters would have been able to practice this trade without having been trained in the Western canon that was imposed by the Spaniards' guild.

This argumentative context gave meaning to the petition presented by the Spanish painters to the *corregidor* of Cusco – the representative of the royal jurisdiction in the city council – in 1688: the formation of separate institutions for Spaniards and Indians would have had major consequences in artistic style, for Indian painters would no longer have been required to pass the Spaniards' examinations before being given official permission to practice this trade. Consequently, Indian painters would have begun to practice a more free and expressive style. According to a strong version of this thesis, this style, which corresponds to the Cusco school of painting, would have increasingly responded to pre-contact indigenous canons.

This finding opened an interesting question: if the emergence of the school of Cusco could be explained as a consequence of this conflict, how could one explain its similarities with other local schools in the Andean highlands? In 1981, Teresa Gisbert proposed that these other local schools, which also presented a high proportion of Indian artists, could have been influenced by the school of Cusco. Commercial routes could have provided the means of diffusion.<sup>50</sup> Two decades later, echoing a publication by Isabel Cruz,<sup>51</sup> Gisbert argued that a similar institutional conflict could have taken place in Potosí, even though she presented no evidence to support her claim.<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> Mesa and Gisbert, *Historia de la Pintura Cuzqueña* [Ed. 2], 228.

<sup>49</sup> In 1982, Mesa and Gisbert cited the following document as their source in this respect: Papeles sueltos del Fondo Vega Centeno, Archivo Departamental del Cuzco. Informe presentado por José Berrío, *Maestro Mayor* del Gremio de pintores, escultores y doradores. Ibid., 226.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>51</sup> Cruz de Amenábar, “Imágenes y Devoción en el Virreinato Peruano,” 63.

<sup>52</sup> Gisbert, “La identidad étnica de los artistas del Virreinato del Perú,” 106.



## II. Stylistic consequences of the conflict in the guild of painters of Cusco

We must keep in mind that Mesa and Gisbert's thesis performs a reactualization of an old topic in this art historical tradition. Already in early writings from the third and fourth decades of the twentieth century we find a recurring reference to training as a mechanism that could lead artistic evolution in this region by facilitating the local artisans' adoption of European techniques, even though it could not assure the achievement of artistic originality.<sup>53</sup> In this line of thought, Cossío del Pomar had argued that a weak institutional context (one that encompassed not only the guild, but also ecclesiastical authorities) had allowed the Andean artisans to express themselves freely, giving rise to a *mestizo* style.<sup>54</sup> Similarly, at the heart of Mesa and Gisbert's argumentation is the claim that the fracture of the guild of painters of Cusco had decisive aesthetic consequences: "*The Cuzco school of painting was born.*"<sup>55</sup>

We can distinguish between a weak and a strong thesis in this respect. According to the weak version, this school of painting presented an alternative to Western art inasmuch as it showed total disregard for the skills that were included in the guild's examinations according to the ordinances of Lima. In this version, the emergence of the Andean schools is explained mainly as a result of the absence of an institutionally enforced obligation to undertake extensive training in representational techniques that were key to the European use of painting during this period. A strong version of this thesis further observes that, in this situation, the resulting style would have increasingly responded to pre-contact indigenous canons. It is of course this second version that connects most directly to the works of Felipe Cossío del Pomar, Luis Álvarez Urquieta, Ángel Guido, and with Mesa and Gisbert's own publications from the 1970s.

Mesa and Gisbert have alternated between both positions. In 1981, Gisbert presented the strong version of this thesis in *El Mercurio*:

---

<sup>53</sup> Cossío del Pomar, "Historia Crítica de la Pintura en el Cuzco"; Álvarez Urquieta, *La pintura en Chile durante el período colonial*; Miguel Solá, *Historia del arte hispano-americano: arquitectura, escultura, pintura y artes menores en la América española durante los siglos XVI, XVII y XVIII* (Editorial Labor, 1958).

<sup>54</sup> Cossío del Pomar, *Arte del Perú Colonial*, 207 f.

<sup>55</sup> Gisbert, "Andean Painting," 27.

A partir de 1688 los pintores indios emprendieron un camino propio. Si bien continuaron copiando grabados, su tendencia estética quedó librada a su criterio y éste empieza a desarrollarse en forma independiente, acercándose cada vez más a moldes primitivos y prehispánicos, como se puede juzgar por la pintura del siglo XVIII;<sup>56</sup>

However, already in 1982 this argument had been slightly attenuated:

...a partir de 1688 los pintores indios emprendieron un camino propio. Si bien siguen la copia de grabados y usan procedimientos técnicos aprendidos en Europa, su tendencia estética quedó librada a su criterio y ésta se empieza a desarrollar en forma independiente, acercándose cada vez más a una creación no occidental, como se puede juzgar por los resultados del siglo XVIII...;<sup>57</sup>

Both sections are almost identical except for the reference to pre-contact indigenous patterns, which has been replaced in the second passage by a reference to a non-Western aesthetic characterized by the inability to convey perspective and to represent the human body according to laws of proportion.<sup>58</sup> This was presented as an authentically naive and spontaneous current that put emphasis on ornamentation.<sup>59</sup>

According to these authors' argumentation from 1982, a first consequence of the division of the guild was that Indian painters lost access to European sources, what forced them to restlessly repeat the motifs they had already at hand. This was presented as the main cause of this school's archaism – a mechanism that had already been described by Enrique Marco Dorta.<sup>60</sup> However, Mesa and Gisbert added that the Spanish and Creole painters had also lost contact with the European state of the art. To distinguish between both forms of archaism, these authors introduced the reference to pre-contact indigenous traditions. First, they noted that the kind of archaism that characterized paintings done by Indians

---

<sup>56</sup> Gisbert, "Pintores Hispanos y Pintores Indígenas en la Ciudad del Cuzco." [*Since 1688, the Indian painters undertook a path of their own. Even though they continued to copy engravings, their aesthetic tendency was liberated to their own criteria, which began to develop independently, becoming increasingly near to primitive and pre-Hispanic molds, as it can be judged from eighteenth-century paintings.*]

<sup>57</sup> Mesa and Gisbert, *Historia de la Pintura Cuzqueña* [Ed. 2], 138. [*...since 1688, the Indian painters undertook a path of their own. Even though they continued to copy engravings and to use technical procedures that had being learned in Europe, their aesthetic tendency was liberated to their own criteria and began to develop independently, becoming increasingly near to a non-Western aesthetic, as it can be judged from the results from the eighteenth-century.*]

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 271.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 22 f., 226 f.

<sup>60</sup> Dorta, "La pintura en Colombia, Ecuador, Peru y Bolivia," 480.

was in accordance with “*an ancestral sensibility*.”<sup>61</sup> Secondly, in their book from 1982 we find the rebirth of an old thesis that had been put forward by Miguel Solá in 1935: that Indian painters could neither feel nor represent Christian sorrow.<sup>62</sup>

Es un arte anecdótico y alegre que hace poco caso de la pintura barroca, por una parte grandilocuente y por otra tenebrista y empastada con gran dominio de la figura. Exponente de esta pintura barroca es Basilio de Santa Cruz cuya obra está hoy bien delimitada y responde a los requerimientos de una sociedad comprometida con los conceptos de una vida como “tránsito” y una muerte como “liberación”, considerando el dolor y la ascesis como caminos de rendición. El cuerpo de San Juan decapitado, de Rivera, en la iglesia de Tinta, y la “Piedad” del convento de Santa Catalina, nos hablan de ese mundo que refleja la atormentada alma hispana, contrapuesto al cosmos indígena, más ligado con la naturaleza y el mundo circundante;<sup>63</sup>

For these authors, paintings done by Basilio de Santa Cruz – himself an Indian – according to a baroque program reflect “the tormented Hispanic soul”; one that was extraneous to the indigenous cosmos. The latter, more closely connected with nature and the immediate surroundings than with the affections of the soul, corresponded to the anecdotal and cheerful paintings of the school of Cusco.

A similarly “strong” thesis was presented by Gisbert in 1986: “*The break between Spanish and Indian artists explain why, after a given moment, Cuzco painting became more indigenous and popular in its style, devoted to old and archaic modes and to the use of gold in the 16th century manner.*”<sup>64</sup> Two years later, Mesa repeated Gisbert's argumentation from 1981:

---

<sup>61</sup> Mesa and Gisbert, *Historia de la Pintura Cuzqueña* [Ed. 2], 24.

<sup>62</sup> Solá, *Historia del arte hispano-americano: arquitectura, escultura, pintura y artes menores en la América española durante los siglos XVI, XVII y XVIII*, 239 f.

<sup>63</sup> Mesa and Gisbert, *Historia de la Pintura Cuzqueña* [Ed. 2], 22-3. [It is an anecdotic and gay art that does not correspond much to baroque painting: grandiloquent yet tenebrist and filled with great dominion of [the human] figure. Basilio de Santa Cruz is a representative of this baroque style in painting. His work, which is well known to us, responds to the requirements of a society that understands life as “transit” and death as “liberation”, while considering pain and ascesis as forms of surrender. The decapitated body of St. Joseph, by Rivera, at the church of Tinta, and the “Pietà” at the convent of Santa Catalina, speak to us about that world that mirrors the tormented Spanish soul – one that is opposed to the indigenous cosmos, more in touch with nature and the surrounding world.]

<sup>64</sup> Gisbert, “Andean Painting,” 26-7.

...les da expresión de su sentir artístico ante el universo de las formas, que a partir de ese momento adquiere para ellos una visión propia basada en la tradición de las culturas prehispánicas y en lo que los pintores indios del siglo XVI, habían acumulado en la práctica de la técnica y estética europea;<sup>65</sup>

In later decades similar arguments have been put forward by Carol Damian,<sup>66</sup> María Concepción García Sáiz,<sup>67</sup> and Roberto Samanez.<sup>68</sup> While Samanez passingly claimed that these paintings corresponded to the aesthetic preferences (*gusto* or taste) of the Indian and Mestizo populations, Damian and García Sáiz argued that these images acquire their original meaning in the context of indigenous religiosity, which is rooted in pre-contact indigenous traditions.

This relation between an ancestral sensibility or an indigenous cosmos and the Cusco school of painting was not mentioned by Mesa and Gisbert in the other texts they published between 1985 and 2002.<sup>69</sup> Other authors would follow this “weak” version of their argument, such as Isabel Cruz de Amenábar,<sup>70</sup> Carol Dean,<sup>71</sup> Ramón Mujica Pinilla,<sup>72</sup> Marcus Burke<sup>73</sup> and Donahue-Wallace.<sup>74</sup> Interestingly, instead of focusing on the absence of perspective and proportion, Ramón Mujica Pinilla described the painterly tradition that is thought to have resulted from the division of the guild as a devotional genre specialized

---

<sup>65</sup> Mesa, “La pintura cuzqueña (1540-1821),” 20.

<sup>66</sup> Damian, *The virgin of the Andes : art and ritual in colonial Cuzco*. [...it expresses their artistic feeling in relation to the universe of forms, which, from this moment on, acquires for them a unique vision based on the traditions of pre-Hispanic cultures and on what the Indian painters from the sixteenth century had accumulated based on the practice of European techniques and aesthetics.]

<sup>67</sup> García Sáiz, “Pintura y Escultura Colonial en Iberoamérica.”

<sup>68</sup> Samanez Argumedo, “Las portadas retablo en el barroco cusqueño,” 183.

<sup>69</sup> José de Mesa and Teresa Gisbert, “El Arte del Siglo XVII en Perú y Bolivia,” in *Arte iberoamericano desde la colonización a la Independencia*, vol. 2, 2nd ed., Summa Artis. Historia General del Arte XIX (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1985), 551. See also Mesa, “La influencia de Flandes en la pintura del Area Andina,” 74; Gisbert, “La identidad étnica de los artistas del Virreinato del Perú,” 110. In the latter publication, Gisbert includes an almost exact copy of the section cited above: see footnote 57.

<sup>70</sup> Cruz de Amenábar, “Imágenes y Devoción en el Virreinato Peruano,” 29. In page 89 Cruz includes an almost exact copy of the section cited above: see footnote 57.

<sup>71</sup> Dean, “Copied Carts: Spanish Prints and Colonial Peruvian Paintings,” 3.

<sup>72</sup> Mujica Pinilla, “Arte e identidad: las raíces culturales del barroco peruano.”

<sup>73</sup> Burke, “The Parallel Course of Latin American and European Art in the Viceregal Era,” 78.

<sup>74</sup> Donahue-Wallace, *Art and Architecture of Viceregal Latin America, 1521-1821*, 140.

in the representation of sculpted miraculous images.<sup>75</sup> In turn, Carol Damian has proposed that the popularity of this genre could have been a result of the simplicity of its production.<sup>76</sup> An interesting exception in this series is provided by María Concepción García Sáiz's discussion of the distinction between European and Amerindian styles, as it may be applied to paintings from the Viceroyalties of New Spain and Peru.<sup>77</sup> Regarding the latter, this author has noted that Mesa and Gisbert's finding of a division of the guild of painters between an Indian and a Spanish-Creole faction shouldn't be assumed as a solution to the problem posed by this distinction, but rather as opening further questions: given that painters from the Indian faction could have opted to follow contemporary Western values, one should ask what triggered a preference for what would later be called an Andean style. More specifically,

El hecho de que los pintores cusqueños se separen en dos gremios a partir de 1688, uno de españoles y criollos y otro de indios, lejos de clarificarnos la situación, consigue sacar a la superficie nuevos interrogantes en torno a las condiciones específicas que debían darse para pertenecer a uno u otro lado. ¿Era la diferenciación étnica la primordial o tenía también algo que ver el tipo de trabajo que se realizaba y la clientela para la que se trabajaba habitualmente?<sup>78</sup>

To what side did a (presumably) Indian painter like Basilio de Santa Cruz Pumacallao belong, when his work responds to the artistic program that was favored in the court in Madrid?<sup>79</sup> Questions like these, that problematize our current knowledge of this epoch, may be able to revitalize this field of research.

---

<sup>75</sup> Mujica Pinilla, "Arte e identidad: las raíces culturales del barroco peruano," 21. See also in this respect: Alfonso Rodríguez G. de Ceballos, "'Trampantojos a lo divino': íconos pintados de Cristo y de la virgen a partir de imágenes de culto en América meridional," in *Actas III Congreso Internacional del Barroco Americano* (presented at the III Congreso Internacional del Barroco Americano. Territorio, Arte, Espacio y Sociedad, Sevilla: Universidad Pablo de Olavide, 2001), 24-33, <http://www.upo.es/depa/webdhuma/areas/arte/actas/3cibi/pagina02.htm>.

<sup>76</sup> Damian, *The virgin of the Andes : art and ritual in colonial Cuzco*, 65.

<sup>77</sup> García Sáiz, "Aproximaciones conceptuales sobre la pintura colonial hispanoamericana," 97.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid. [*The fact that the painters in Cusco separated themselves in two guilds in 1688, a guild of Spaniards and Creoles and another one of Indians, instead of clarifying this situation raises new questions regarding the specific conditions that had to be met to belong to either side. Was this defined by the ethnic differentiation or did it also have to do with the kind of work that was done and with the clientele that was usually served?*]

<sup>79</sup> Mesa and Gisbert, *Historia de la Pintura Cuzqueña* [Ed. 2], 166; Francisco Stastny, *Breve Historia del arte en el Perú : la pintura precolombina, colonial y republicana* (Lima: Editorial Universo, 1967), 41.

### III. Racial conflict in the guild of painters of Cusco

This section reviews the construction of this historical narration in more detail, focusing in the role that has been attributed to the guild of painters. The analysis is organized in three parts: a first one discusses Mesa and Gisbert's interpretation of the Spanish painters' petition to the *corregidor* of Cusco. After recognizing the key assumptions that support Mesa and Gisbert's thesis, a second part reviews complementary information about the operations of the painters' guild in Cusco. Finally, the situation of guilds in colonial Lima, as it has been presented by Francisco Quiroz, is used as an index of the situation of the painters' guild in Cusco.

According to Mesa and Gisbert's main version of this thesis, as it was presented in their *Historia...* from 1982, the painters' guild was a key element in the social context that made possible the emergence of the school of Cusco. Although there is no documented evidence of the foundation of a guild of painters in this city, this institution is explicitly mentioned in the notarial document from 1688. This document contains the answer given by seven non-Indian painters<sup>80</sup> to the city's *corregidor*, who had decided to allow the Indian painters to separate themselves from the guild: “...desimos que es benido a nra noticia, de que los yndios pintores an presentado peticion en que piden apartarse de nro Gremio, obligandose de haser este año el arco triunfal.”<sup>81</sup> I recognize in this passage a second issue that could have been raised by the Indian painters in a previous petition: that they should be allowed to build that year the painters' triumphal arch for the celebrations of the Corpus Christi with exclusion of the non-Indian painters. According to Mesa and Gisbert's interpretation, however, “...los indios se niegan a participar en la ejecución del arco.”<sup>82</sup> At

---

<sup>80</sup> It is possible that there were actually not many more than seven non-Indian painters in the city's guild at the time, for they say: “... con nros compañeros los doradores y escultores que son pocos ellos que no pasan de dies o onse y nosotros somos otros tantos.” Villanueva Urteaga, “Nacimiento de la escuela cuzqueña de pintura,” 12. Mesa and Gisbert have also proposed that they were ten. Mesa and Gisbert, *Historia de la Pintura Cuzqueña* [Ed. 2], 270.

<sup>81</sup> Villanueva Urteaga, “Nacimiento de la escuela cuzqueña de pintura,” 12. [...we say that we have received the news that the Indian painters have petitioned to separate themselves from our Guild, being obliged to build this year the triumphal arch.]

<sup>82</sup> Mesa and Gisbert, *Historia de la Pintura Cuzqueña* [Ed. 2], 137. [...the Indians refuse to participate in the execution of the arch.] The translation offered by Carol Damian has radicalized this interpretation: “...we announce the news that the Indian painters in the presented petition ask to separate themselves from our group, forcing us to make for this year the triumphal arch.” Damian, *The virgin of the Andes : art and ritual in colonial Cuzco*, 97. The same interpretation has also been presented by: Gisbert, “La identidad étnica de los artistas del Virreinato del Perú,” 122; Wuffarden, “Las Escuelas Pictóricas Virreinales,” 84; Cruz de

this point, however, this is a minor issue. The decision of the *corregidor* in this respect, as it was cited by the Spanish painters, is much more clear: “...a Vmd. pedimos y suplicamos se sirva de mandar se lleve a devida ex. on el auto por Vmd. proveydo en que se sirvio de mandar que los dhos yndios hagan un año el arco triunfal del dia de Cospus y otro año nosotros con dhos doradores y escultores...”<sup>83</sup> This authority had resolved that both parties should not build the said triumphal arch together. It is also clear in this passage that the non-Indian painters were not against this decision. Furthermore, since they wrote that the *corregidor* had given credit to what the Indian painters said and that he had ruled in favor of them, we might also infer – along with the main interpretation of this document – that the Indian painters could indeed have separated themselves from the guild around 1688. However, this remains a working hypothesis requiring further support.

Another section of this letter deals with what has been interpreted as the main cause of this conflict:

...no es bien que esto se nos pague con testimonios fal- /f. lv./ -sos que nos an levantado en descredito y desdoro de nra presuncion por acreditarse y ser admitidos en su pedimento y pues ellos no an dado prueba de lo que an relatado de nosotros deven ser corregidos y reprehendidos severam.te y si lo an provado se nos de traslado para dar nros descargos pues en general nos an desacreditado, siendo así que solos tres o quatro hombres son de los que se nombran por capataeses y de estos el que fueros culpados estamos prestos a la rrestitucion de lo que disen ellos que con violencia se les quita y agravia y estamos asi mesmo a pagar la pena si lo an provado y de lo contrario no se debe dar credito...;<sup>84</sup>

---

Amenábar, “Imágenes y Devoción en el Virreinato Peruano,” 88. Marcus Burke has presented the same interpretation, adding that the *corregidor* would have decided that each of the two groups should erect an arch, which is clearly not supported by a literal reading of this letter. Burke, “The Parallel Course of Latin American and European Art in the Viceregal Era,” 78.

<sup>83</sup> Villanueva Urteaga, “Nacimiento de la escuela cuzqueña de pintura,” 12. [*We ask and beg of you that you see that your ruling be properly executed, in which you command that the above-mentioned Indians should make one year the triumphal arch for the day of the Cospus [sic] and that the next year we should make it with the above-mentioned gilders and sculptors...*] I depart from Carol Damian's translation, which interprets “dhos” as “dos” [two] when it stands for “dichos” [above-mentioned]: “*We ask and beg of you to send the two Indians to pay one year of triumphant arch in the day of Corpus and another year for us with two gold finishers and sculptors.*” Damian, *The virgin of the Andes : art and ritual in colonial Cuzco*, 12.; emphasis is mine.

<sup>84</sup> Villanueva Urteaga, “Nacimiento de la escuela cuzqueña de pintura,” 12. [*...it is not right that this be paid to us with false testimony which has been raised to our discredit and impediments, for they have been given credit and their petition has been admitted and they have not offered proof of that which they have said of us and so they should be corrected and reprimanded severely and if they have offered proof, we should be allowed to present our defense for we have been discredited in general, since there are just three or four men*

According to Mesa and Gisbert, the authors of this letter, in an attempt to avoid the division of the guild, expressed in this passage their willingness to repair the damage that they had admittedly committed. The Spanish and Creole painters in Cusco would have feared that, following the division of the guild, they wouldn't have been able to recruit enough painters to attend the most important clients in a time when commissions were becoming bigger and Spanish and Indian painters had begun to compete on equal terms.<sup>85</sup>

These authors' interpretation of this document, as well as the thesis it was meant to support, assumes that the guild was strong enough to monopolize the granting of the title of master, and that this title was given preferably to non-Indian painters. It further assumes that the guild's prohibition to sell paintings without this title was effectively enforced. Thus, through the operations of the guild, Indians would have been kept in a subordinated position within the workshops that were allowed to sell pictures. The division of the guild would have meant that more Indians would have had access to positions of authority and, foremost, that they would have been able to run workshops and sell their pictures, given that they wouldn't have been required to receive advanced training in the Western tradition of painting as a condition for their being allowed to practice this trade. The school of Cusco would present the aesthetic consequences of this conflict, as it wouldn't have responded to the Western tradition but to its adoption by the indigenous peoples of central Andes.

Before reviewing these assumptions more closely, I want to call attention to an alternative reading of this last passage. I have already noted that we shouldn't assume that the Spanish and Creole painters were against the separation of the Indian members of the guild. At least it is clear that they were not against the decision of the *corregidor* regarding the fabrication of the triumphal arch for the celebration of the Corpus Christi. I think that this passage contains the main petition that these painters wanted to present to the city's *corregidor*. According to this document, the Indian painters had asked the *corregidor* that the

---

*who call themselves capataces and it is them who blame us, we are ready to retribute that which they say has been violently taken from them [and to repair the damage] and we are equally ready to pay the penalty if they have proven it and otherwise they should not be given credit...*

<sup>85</sup> Mesa and Gisbert, *Historia de la Pintura Cuzqueña* [Ed. 2], 137 f. See also Damian, "Artist and Patron in Colonial Cuzco: Workshops, Contracts, and a Petition for Independence."



non-Indian members of the guild – including the authors of the document – should pay for what had been violently taken from them (we don't know what this is). I propose that, through this letter, the Spanish and Creole painters merely asked the *corregidor* to carefully review any evidence that could have been presented by the Indians to support this petition and to allow them – that is, the Spanish and Creoles authors of the letter – to defend themselves. The authors further asked that, should the Indians have presented no evidence in this respect, they should be reprimanded.

Contrary to Mesa and Gisbert's interpretation of this document, I think that we shouldn't assume that, before this conflict took place, the guild had been able to successfully enforce the observance ordinances that were identical to the ones that had been approved for the painters' guild of Lima in 1649. This assumption not only departs from the content of this key document, but is also very difficult to verify against other historical data. Indeed, further documentation of the situation of guilds in colonial central Andes suggests that it is unlikely that the painters' guild in Cusco would have corresponded to how it has been depicted by Mesa and Gisbert. To support these authors' thesis we require more information about the situations of Indians in the painters' guild and about their effective separation from it, about this institution's ordinances and date of foundation, and about its capacity to enforce the observance of its ordinances before the 1680s. Since I have already discussed the problem of the Indian painters' separation from the guild, in the following I'll focus on the other three.

A first problem is presented by the absence of documents that deal at length with the ordinances of the guild in Cusco. This problem has usually been solved by assuming that this institution was either an extension<sup>86</sup> or an imitation of the painters' guild of Lima, the ordinances of which were published in 1649.<sup>87</sup> Several authors have provided more details regarding the foundation of this organization in Cusco, which require further proof. Teresa Gisbert has argued in at least two occasions that the painters Francisco Serrano and Mar-

---

<sup>86</sup> Mesa and Gisbert, *Historia de la Pintura Cuzqueña* [Ed. 2], 137-8; Cruz de Amenábar, "Imágenes y Devoción en el Virreinato Peruano."

<sup>87</sup> A transcription of the ordinances of the guild of painters of Lima was published in: Mesa and Gisbert, *Historia de la Pintura Cuzqueña* [Ed. 2], 309-11. Mesa and Gisbert cite the following document as their source: Archivo General de la Nación. Lima. Protocolo de Pedro Bastante Ceballos, 1647-49. Procolo No. 18, del siglo XVII, registro de 1649, folios 3-4 y 42v – 47r.

cos Ribera founded the guild in Cusco shortly after 1649.<sup>88</sup> She has not mentioned her sources in this respect. More recently, Marcus Burke – who has reportedly used Mesa and Gisbert's *Historia...* from 1982 – seems to have mistaken the two guilds when asserting that the guild of Cusco was founded in 1649.<sup>89</sup> In turn, Kelly Donahue-Wallace has affirmed that “*Painters in Lima and Cuzco... did not publish ordinances until 1647 and 1649 respectively...*,” although she later refers to “*The 1649 Lima painters' ordinances...*”<sup>90</sup> This confusion reveals that further documentation regarding the history of the painters' guild of Cusco, specially before 1688, is required in order to support this thesis. Without it, we cannot exclude the possibility that this guild was barely a few months old when the Indian's petition was presented to the *corregidor* of Cusco. According to an article by Ramón Gutiérrez from 1979, only since 1674 are the operations of guilds in Cusco documented, which correspond to “*...pulperos, tocineros, mantequeros, pasteleros, y panaderos que erigen sus Altares para las fiestas del Corpus Christi.*”<sup>91</sup> If the guild of painters wasn't older than that, we can only expect that its division would have had little, if any, consequences in style.

We also require more information regarding the situation of Indians in the guild of painters. They are not mentioned in the ordinances of the guild of Lima, whereas *negros*, *zambos* and *mulatos* were explicitly excluded from it: “*...que ningún pintor ni dorador maestro (ni oficial) enseñe mulatos, negros, zambos ni otras castas...*”<sup>92</sup> However, these ordinances did establish that the *alcaldes veedores* (two for the art of painting and two for that of gilding) and the *fiscal* of the guild had to be Spanish.<sup>93</sup>

Interestingly, Jorge Bernales Ballesteros has suggested that Indian painters in Lima may also have established a separate guild or a separate *cofradía*, “*...pues los más de ellos*

---

<sup>88</sup> In 1986, Gisbert mentioned both Serrano and Ribera as founders of the guild of painters of Cusco: Gisbert, “Andean Painting,” 23. In 2002, she only mentioned Serrano: Gisbert, “La identidad étnica de los artistas del Virreinato del Perú,” 110.

<sup>89</sup> Burke, “The Parallel Course of Latin American and European Art in the Viceregal Era,” 73.

<sup>90</sup> Donahue-Wallace, *Art and Architecture of Viceregal Latin America, 1521-1821*, 140.

<sup>91</sup> Gutiérrez, “Notas sobre organización artesanal en el Cusco durante la colonia,” 2.

<sup>92</sup> Mesa and Gisbert, *Historia de la Pintura Cuzqueña [Ed. 2]*, 310. [...that no master (or official) painter or gilder may teach mulatos, negros, zambos or other castas...]

<sup>93</sup> See footnote 87.

*tuvieron vivienda y taller en Santiago del Cercado*,<sup>94</sup> the latter being the town where Indians were segregated in eastern Lima.<sup>95</sup> To my knowledge, nobody has taken up Bernal's claim, which would be hard to give account for in Mesa and Gisbert's framework unless one insisted on demographic arguments: that the Indian painters were more in Cusco than in Lima, or that they represented a bigger proportion of the total number of painters in the city, so that the aesthetic effects that are attributed to this situation in Cusco and in the other Andean schools couldn't be generalized to the whole central Andean region, including Lima.

A more important problem is posed by the lack of evidence regarding the power of the guild in Cusco. According to the ordinances of the guild of Lima, nobody was to use the title of *maestro artífice* if he or she had not learned this art from an approved master and had not been examined. As it has been noted, this exam is crucial for Mesa and Gisbert's argument:

...que el pintor o dorador que aprueben y le den título de maestro artífice, ha de dar razón así de palabra como de obra, por las preguntas siguientes: ha de dibujar una figura humana de pie entero de pechos y otra de medio perfil y otra de espaldas con sus partes y tamaños conforme a la simetría y al arte; así mesmo un cuerpo de una mujer y de un niño. Luego ha de pintar un lienzo con una o más figuras desnudas y esto se entiende al óleo o al fresco o al temple, como sea conforme al arte; y también responderá de palabra, algunas de las preguntas que se le hicieren acerca de la perspectiva para historias y así mismo del trato y uso de los colores y temples y aparejos de los lienzos, y hallándose hábil y suficiente, se le despachará su título de maestro artífice y podrá usar de él, libremente;<sup>96</sup>

---

<sup>94</sup> Jorge Bernal Ballesteros, "La Pintura en Lima durante el Virreinato," in *Pintura en el Virreinato del Perú*, 2nd ed. (Lima: Banco de Crédito, 2002), 41. [...since most of them had their residency and their workshop in Santiago del Cercado]

<sup>95</sup> Alexandre Coello de la Rosa, *Espacios de exclusión, espacios de poder: el cercado de Lima colonial (1586-1606)* (Fondo Editorial PUCP, 2006).

<sup>96</sup> Mesa and Gisbert, *Historia de la Pintura Cuzqueña* [Ed. 2], 310. [...that the painter or gilder that they [the guild] approve and give the title of master to should answer the following questions in orally and practically: [he or she] shall draw a human figure once from the front, once from the side, and once from the back, with its parts and sizes according to symmetry and art; likewise, a female and an infant body. Then [the painter or gilder] shall paint a canvas with one or more naked figures. This should be done using oils, using soft dispenser, or al fresco, according to art; and [the painter or gilder] shall also answer some questions that will be made to [him or her] regarding [the use of] perspective in historias and regarding the use of colors, dispensers and stretchers, and if [he or she] is found skillful enough, [he or she] will be given the title of maestro artífice and will be allowed to make use of it freely.]

These ordinances establish that only licensed masters could practice painting and gilding as a trade. Can we assume that these ordinances were enforced in Cusco before 1688? The few published records that mention the operations of this guild in Cusco – none of which is previous to 1688 – may be taken to speak against this assumption: the document from 1688 that gives testimony of profound internal conflicts and institutional instability; Juan Esteban Álvarez's petition to reinforce the guild, presented in 1704; and a document from 1810, in which another *Maestro Mayor* of the arts of painting, sculpture and gilding, José Berrío, announced that there was no active painter left in the guild.

If we assume that the guild's ordinances were not enforced in Cusco more strictly than in Lima and that the painters' guild was not an exception in the entire population of guilds, we may take the general situation of guilds in Lima as an index of the situation of the guild of painters in Cusco. According to Francisco Quiroz,<sup>97</sup> even when the ordinances of the guilds in colonial Lima resembled those in Seville – the ordinances of the painters' guild of Lima do make explicit reference to this city's guild as a model –, these were not enforced as severely as in this city.<sup>98</sup> As he noted,

El gremio limeño tuvo escasas funciones económicas y limitado poder para negar el ejercicio de los oficios a los no agremiados. En la práctica, el gremio limeño colonial no tuvo una actuación que pudiese ser considerada como gremial propiamente dicha. Los oficios quedaban “libres.” No se practicó una verdadera persecución contra todos los que usaban los oficios agremiados. Tampoco contra quienes comercializaban los productos artesanales al margen de los gremios;<sup>99</sup>

Already in the last decades of the seventeenth century, guilds in Lima did rarely take exams. According to Quiroz, this key procedure in the guilds' ordinances had been forgotten by mid-eighteenth century.<sup>100</sup> Already this broad description of the situation of guilds in

---

<sup>97</sup> Quiroz, *Gremios, razas y libertad de industria : Lima colonial*.

<sup>98</sup> Mexico presented the opposite case. See: Manuel Carrera Stampa, *Los Gremios Mexicanos. La organización gremial en Nueva España 1521-1861*, Edición y Distribución Ibero Americana de Publicaciones., Colección de Estudios Histórico-Económicos Mexicanos de la Cámara Nacional de la Industria de Transformación (México, 1954), 237.

<sup>99</sup> Quiroz, *Gremios, razas y libertad de industria : Lima colonial*, 6. [Guilds in Lima had few economic functions and limited power to deny the exercise of the trade to non-members. In practice, guilds in colonial Lima didn't have a role that one could properly qualify as that of a guild. Trades remained “free.” There wasn't a real persecution of all the people who practiced the trades that had been formed into a guild. Neither were those who commercialized goods in the margin of the guilds persecuted.]

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 41.

Lima makes it unlikely that the painters' guild of Cusco would have operated in such an effective way prior to the 1680s so that the separation of the Indian members would have produced a change in style of the magnitude that is supposed by Mesa and Gisbert.

Regarding the situation of Indians, Quiroz notes that they were commonly not subject to the ordinances of guilds. Their belonging to a “republic of Indians” allowed them not to pay the taxes and charges that were related to the guild's decisions.<sup>101</sup> Among these were the *alcabala*, a general sales tax,<sup>102</sup> and the *media anata*, a tax levied on personal income related to the holding of a public office. The latter was applied to artisans in possession of the title of master and to those holding a position of authority within the guild (*alcalde veedor, fiscal*).<sup>103</sup> Indians were also exempted from charges related to the infringement of the guild's ordinances – such as the requirement of examination. Moreover, it was not rare that Indians were exempted from examinations and visitations by guild authorities and that they were given the title of master informally and *ex post facto* in recognition of their having opened a *tienda*.<sup>104</sup>

Even if Quiroz's research doesn't give evidence of the operations of the painters' guild in colonial Cusco, it does depict a context in which there is no reason to assume that the Indian painters' separation from the latter – what may have occurred around 1688, according to the aforementioned petition – would have been decisive in the formation of the school of Cusco as an aesthetic tradition or in the precarization of the Indian painters' working conditions. Such a causal relation may be spurious. Like Felipe Cossío del Pomar proposed in 1958,<sup>105</sup> for all we know, the conflict in the guild probably occurred in a context

---

<sup>101</sup> A similar claim has been presented by: Gutiérrez, “Notas sobre organización artesanal en el Cusco durante la colonia,” 5.

<sup>102</sup> During the seventeenth century in Spain, painters were subject to the *alcabala* only when they sold their products directly to the open public: Juan José Martín González, *El Artista en la Sociedad Española del siglo XVII* (Madrid, 1984), 179. As such, it may have been used for signaling painting as a novel and ingenious art distinct from (other) commercial products: Mary Crawford Volk, “On Velázquez and the Liberal Arts,” *The Art Bulletin* 60, no. 1 (March 1978): 69-86; Mary Crawford Volk, “Addenda: The Madrid Academy,” *The Art Bulletin* 61, no. 4 (December 1979): 627. This distinction was reflected in the formation of academies that were to compete with the old guilds: Julián Gállego, *El pintor de artesano a artista* (España: Universidad de Granada, 1976). Thus, regarding the specific situation of the guilds of painters, it is not superfluous to recall that also in Spain this was a time of crisis for these organizations.

<sup>103</sup> Quiroz, *Gremios, razas y libertad de industria : Lima colonial*, 115.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 63-70.

<sup>105</sup> Cossío del Pomar, *Arte del Perú Colonial*, 207 f.

where the ordinances of the guild, if they were similar to the ones that were approved for the painters' guild in Lima, were not effectively enforced. In such a context, Indian artisans may already have enjoyed high levels of freedom prior to their separation from the guild.

#### IV. Discussion

Based on the ordinances of the guild of Lima alone, one could expect that the painters' guilds in colonial central Andes played an incipient role as administrators of artistic expertise, since the examinations that they contemplate make reference to criteria of correctness that trigger an at least incipient observation of pictures in the context of an artistic history. However, there is no evidence to support the assumption that the painters' guild of Cusco would have enforced such ordinances. In the absence of such documentation, we can use the situation of guilds in colonial Lima as an index of the situation of the painters' guild in Cusco, given that we assume that the guild's ordinances were not enforced in Cusco more strictly than in Lima and that the painters' guild was not an exception in the entire population of guilds. In this context, it is unlikely that the Lima ordinances would have been effectively enforced even by this city's guild, especially in what refers to the requirement of practical and theoretical examinations. Even if they were, Indian artisans are likely to have been exempted from them. Therefore, Mesa and Gisbert's thesis has to be corrected. An alternative is offered by a luhmannian reading of Francisco Stastny's typology of the geography of art in the early modern period. From this point of view, the relative "weakness" of the guild of painters together with the stylistic characteristics of the school of painting of Cusco can be understood as part of a more encompassing societal context.

Following Francisco Stastny, we can distinguish between artistic centers, provinces, peripheries and colonial peripheries as they presented themselves in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>106</sup> According to this typology, only in artistic centers the production and evaluation of art was primarily guided by an observation of the difference that the

---

<sup>106</sup> Stastny, "Arte colonial." Stastny explicitly assumed the distinction between center, province and periphery from Jan Bialostocki, "Some Values of Artistic Periphery," in *World Art. Themes of Unity and Diversity*, ed. Irving Lavin, vol. 1 (presented at the XXVIth International Congress of the History of Art, Pennsylvania, 1989), 49-54. His work can also be interpreted as continuing the analysis proposed by Erwin Walter Palm, "La ciudad colonial como centro de irradiación de las escuelas arquitectónicas y pictóricas," *Boletín de Centro de Investigaciones Históricas y Estéticas*, no. 14 (1972): 25-30.

object in question made in relation to an artistic tradition. In the level of artistic organizations, guilds and academies in artistic centers functioned as administrators of artistic expertise. Artistic change in the nearby provinces depended on stimuli received from their center of reference and was limited to mere variations of imported prototypes and to decorative details. Artistic peripheries, which are defined by their location in the geographical limits of a cultural area, received stimuli from several centers of artistic innovation. In this context, local artists and audiences didn't reject old accomplishments in favor of newer ones, nor did they comprehend their work as establishing a dialogue with the first. On the contrary, stimuli from diverse centers could be integrated with solutions that had become obsolete according to metropolitan experts – a situation that characterized artistic production in the colonial central Andes.<sup>107</sup> Stastny has further argued that, in colonial peripheries (as distinguished from peripheries in general), artistic innovation could also be triggered by the cultural diversity that results from the conquest of non-western civilizations or cultures.

From the point of view of Niklas Luhmann's sociological theory, Stastny's characterization of the situation of artistic centers corresponds to a form of art that already aims towards autonomy. The differentiation of art-specific criteria of evaluation allow for the self-programming of individual artworks and for their positioning in a still loosely coupled network of intertextual relations.<sup>108</sup> In this context, art has begun to constitute itself as a branch of sociocultural evolution by differentiating its own mechanisms of variation, selection and stabilization. The observation of innovations starts to be focused on the level of the artworks' self-programming: on their ability to construct a reality of their own. Solutions to this problem that are considered successful can be adopted in the context of new

---

<sup>107</sup> Francisco Stastny, "Modernidad, ruptura y arcaísmo en el arte colonial," in *La presencia de la modernidad artística europea en América*, ed. Gustavo Curiel Méndez, Renato González Mello, and Juana Gutiérrez Haces, vol. 3 (presented at the Arte, historia e identidad en América : XVI Coloquio Internacional de Historia del Arte, México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, 1994), 939; Juan Manuel Ugarte Eléspuru, "Introducción a la Pintura Virreinal," in *Pintura Virreinal, Arte y Tesoros del Perú* (Lima: Banco de Crédito del Perú, 1973), 22 f.; Leopoldo Castedo, "El arte colonial," in *Historia del Arte Iberoamericano*, vol. 1 (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1988), 207; Mujica Pinilla, "Arte e identidad: las raíces culturales del barroco peruano," 22-4; Samanez Argumedo, "Las portadas retablo en el barroco cusqueño," 182.

<sup>108</sup> Luhmann, *Art as a Social System*, 226-35; Niklas Luhmann, "Das Kunstwerk und die Selbstreproduktion der Kunst," in *Schriften zu Kunst und Literatur*, ed. Niels Werber (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2008), 139-188.

artworks. In retrospective, this process can be signaled by the historicized concept of style, which highlights the distinction between both levels: stylistic marks don't ensure success. Stastny's characterization of artistic provinces clearly presents a situation in which this condition of autonomous artistic operations is not met: stylistic marks are sufficient to ensure success when the public aims at merely adopting and imitating the life style of the metropolis. Instead of evolution, one might rather speak of fashion, for the marking of novelty occurs on the level of style rather than on that of the self-programming of individual pieces. Peripheries, meanwhile, remain on the margins of this process. Here, the cumulative and self-referential character of differentiated artistic evolution is absent, together with the adoption of stylistic novelties. As Francisco Stastny so graphically described it, *"...los artistas virreinales tienden con extraña facilidad a volver al preciosismo manierista de los inicios o, inclusive, a soluciones que recuerdan lenguajes artísticos de épocas de considerable mayor antigüedad... quien observe el panorama desde el lado de Europa tendrá la impresión de estar mirando el arte occidental en un espejo que lo distorsiona."*<sup>109</sup>

Niklas Luhmann distinguished three cumulative levels of differentiation of social realms that are useful for understanding the situation of the institutions of art in these contexts.<sup>110</sup> In a first moment, situations are differentiated which correspond to the utilization of specific media of communication. In art, situations provide frames that signal the observers that it is expected from them that they let their experiences be guided by the self-programming of artworks. Art-specific situations allow for the differentiation of the specific complementary role provided by an artistic public that *"...could no longer be integrated via a stratification of households."*<sup>111</sup> As Rudolf Stichweh has pointed out, the differentiation of leading and complementary roles in art (artist/public) was accompanied by the formation of secondary leading ones (amateur and connoisseur) that mediate be-

---

<sup>109</sup> Stastny, "Modernidad, ruptura y arcaísmo en el arte colonial," 939. [*...viceregal artists tend with great facility to return to the mannerist preciousness of the beginnings or even to solutions that remind us of considerably older artistic languages... those who observe this landscape from the European side will get the impression of being looking at western art through a distorting mirror.*] This is a highly consensual observation. See also: Ugarte Eléspuru, "Introducción a la Pintura Virreinal," 22-3; Castedo, "El arte colonial," 207; Mujica Pinilla, "Arte e identidad: las raíces culturales del barroco peruano," 22-24; Samanez Argumedo, "Las portadas retablo en el barroco cusqueño," 182.

<sup>110</sup> Niklas Luhmann, "Evolution und Geschichte," in *Soziologische Aufklärung*, vol. 2, 2nd ed. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1982), 150-169.

<sup>111</sup> Luhmann, *Art as a Social System*, 239.



tween the other two.<sup>112</sup> Finally, a system of art is constituted when, “...für spezifische Situationen eine Mehrheit unterschiedlicher Rollen für komplementäres Zusammenwirken ausdifferenziert sind und dadurch eine besondere Funktion erfüllen...”<sup>113</sup> This artistic function, which delimits the problem-solving realm in reference to which all other systems are considered irrelevant, was defined by Luhmann as: “...demonstrating the compelling forces of order in the realm of the possible.”<sup>114</sup>

Stastny's observations regarding the function of guilds and academies as administrators of artistic expertise in artistic centers would correspond to at least the second level of differentiation in Luhmann's scheme; i.e. to a context in which art-specific roles have been differentiated. In the operational level, this implies that art has differentiated a basal code that guides its operations with independence from other social realms, so that an artistic expertise is meaningful. An extreme example of guilds of painters assuming a role as mediators of artistic expertise is offered by Maarten Prak's analysis of guilds in the Dutch golden age. Painters' guilds in the Netherlands not only specified conditions of membership that implied such differentiated criteria of evaluation (e.g. three years of training in a local master's workshop) but also assumed an active role in the formation of audiences through showrooms, lectures and publications.<sup>115</sup>

We can observe that differentiated artistic criteria were implied in the examinations contemplated by the ordinances of the painters' guild of Lima,<sup>116</sup> as far as they were focused on the correct use of coloration, on the achievement of anatomical plausibility and on the construction of perspective. Based on Mesa and Gisbert's thesis, one would hypothesize that these ordinances were effectively enforced in Cusco throughout the seventeenth century. According to the previous reflexions, this hypothesis implies that the differentiation of art in this region would have reached at least the intermediate level in Luhmann's scheme, in which leading and complementary roles are to be found. In Stastny's typology, Cusco would have constituted itself as a major center of artistic production, as distin-

---

<sup>112</sup> Rudolph Stichweh, “Inklusion in Funktionssysteme der modernen Gesellschaft,” in *Inklusion und Exklusion : Studien zur Gesellschaftstheorie* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2005), 13-44.

<sup>113</sup> Luhmann, “Evolution und Geschichte,” 154.

<sup>114</sup> Luhmann, *Art as a Social System*, 148.

<sup>115</sup> Maarten Prak, “Guilds and the Development of the Art Market during the Dutch Golden Age,” *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 30, no. 3/4 (2003): 247 ff.

<sup>116</sup> See footnote 87 .

guished from artistic provinces, peripheries and colonial peripheries. Furthermore, the Indian painters' separation from the guild around 1688 – an event that is interpreted as triggering the emergence of the *mestizo* school of painting – would be a cause of artistic *dedifferentiation*, for criteria of evaluation specific to art would have become redundant. However, the previous analyses show that the role attributed to the racial conflict that took place within the painters' guild of Cusco around 1688 by both the weak and the strong versions of Mesa and Gisbert's thesis isn't supported by historical documentation. With all probability, the situation of artistic production in the colonial central Andes during this period corresponded more closely to Stastny's characterization of artistic peripheries. In Luhmann's framework one observes that in such a context painting had not differentiated complementary roles that operated with independence from the form of stratification of society at large in reference to a specific form of communicational expertise. In conclusion, the Indian painters' separation from the guild of Cusco around 1688 cannot be interpreted as having triggered the emergence of the local school of *mestizo* painting because the societal conditions that would have made such a consequence possible were absent.

## References

- Alvarez Urquieta, Luis. *La pintura en Chile durante el período colonial*. Santiago de Chile: Dirección General de Prisiones, 1933.
- Bernales Ballesteros, Jorge. “La Pintura en Lima durante el Virreinato.” In *Pintura en el Virreinato del Perú*, 31-107. 2nd ed. Lima: Banco de Crédito, 2002.
- Bialostocki, Jan. “Some Values of Artistic Periphery.” In *World Art. Themes of Unity and Diversity*, edited by Irving Lavin, 1:49-54. Pennsylvania, 1989.
- Burke, Marcus. “The Parallel Course of Latin American and European Art in the Viceregal Era.” In *The Arts in Latin America, 1492-1820*, edited by Joseph J. Rishel and Suzanne L. Stratton, 71-86, 2006.
- Carrera Stampa, Manuel. *Los Gremios Mexicanos. La organización gremial en Nueva España 1521-1861*. Edición y Distribución Ibero Americana de Publicaciones. Colección de Estudios Histórico-Económicos Mexicanos de la Cámara Nacional de la Industria de Transformación. México, 1954.
- Castedo, Leopoldo. “El arte colonial.” In *Historia del Arte Iberoamericano*, 1:189-444. Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1988.

- Coello de la Rosa, Alexandre. *Espacios de exclusión, espacios de poder: el cercado de Lima colonial (1586-1606)*. Fondo Editorial PUCP, 2006.
- Cossío del Pomar, Felipe. *Arte del Perú Colonial*. México - Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1958.
- . “Historia Crítica de la Pintura en el Cuzco.” Tesis para optar el grado de doctor en filosofía, historia y letras, Universidad del Cuzco, 1922.
- . *Pintura colonial : escuela cuzqueña*. Cuzco: Rozas, 1928.
- Crawford Volk, Mary. “Addenda: The Madrid Academy.” *The Art Bulletin* 61, no. 4 (December 1979): 627.
- . “On Velázquez and the Liberal Arts.” *The Art Bulletin* 60, no. 1 (March 1978): 69-86.
- Cruz de Amenábar, Isabel. “Imágenes y Devoción en el Virreinato Peruano.” In *Arte y Sociedad en Chile 1550-1650*, 19-116. Santiago: Ediciones Universidad Católica de Chile, 1986.
- Damian, Carol. “Artist and Patron in Colonial Cuzco: Workshops, Contracts, and a Petition for Independence.” *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 4, no. 1 (Winter 1995): 23-53.
- . *The virgin of the Andes : art and ritual in colonial Cuzco*. Miami Beach, Fla.: Grassfield Pr., 1995.
- Dean, Carolyn. “Copied Carts: Spanish Prints and Colonial Peruvian Paintings.” *The Art Bulletin* 78, no. 1 (March 1996): 98-110.
- Donahue-Wallace, Kelly. *Art and Architecture of Viceregal Latin America, 1521-1821*. UNM Press, 2008.
- Dorta, Enrique Marco. “La pintura en Colombia, Ecuador, Peru y Bolivia.” In *Historia del Arte Hispanoamericano*, 2:443-494. Barcelona, Madrid, Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro: Salvat Editores, 1950.
- Estabridis Cárdenas, Ricardo. “La Virgen entrega el rosario a Santo Domingo de Guzmán.” In *Pintura en el Virreinato del Perú*, 374-375. 2nd ed. Arte y Tesoros del Perú. Lima: Banco de Crédito del Perú, 2002.
- Gállego, Julián. *El pintor de artesano a artista*. España: Universidad de Granada, 1976.
- García Sáiz, María Concepción. “Aproximaciones conceptuales sobre la pintura colonial hispanoamericana.” In *Pintura, escultura y artes útiles en Iberoamérica, 1500-*

- 1825, edited by Ramón Gutiérrez, 83-100. Manuales Arte Cátedra. Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra, 1995.
- . “Pintura y Escultura Colonial en Iberoamérica.” In *Historia del Arte Iberoamericano*, edited by Ramón Gutiérrez and Rodrigo Gutiérrez Viñuales, 63-117. Barcelona: Lunwerg Editores, 2000.
- Gisbert, Teresa. “Andean Painting.” In *Gloria in excelsis : the virgin and angels in viceregal painting of Peru and Bolivia ; Center for Inter-American Relations, New York, Nov. 12, 1985-Feb. 10, 1986; Archer M. Huntington Art Gallery, Univ. of Texas at Austin, March 23-May 4, 1986 ; Center for the Fine Arts, Miami, May 19-July 20, 1986*, 22-31. New York: Center for Inter-American Relations, 1986.
- . *Iconografía y Mitos Indígenas en el Arte*. La Paz, 1980.
- . “La identidad étnica de los artistas del Virreinato del Perú.” In *El Barroco Peruano*, 1:99-143. Arte y Tesoros del Perú. Lima: Banco de Crédito, 2002.
- . “Pintores Hispanos y Pintores Indígenas en la Ciudad del Cuzco.” *El Mercurio*, November 29, 1981, sec. Artes y Letras.
- Goyburu, Raúl. *El Barroco del Nuevo Mundo*. La Piedra de los Doce Ángulos, 2007.
- Guido, Ángel. *Redescubrimiento de América en el Arte*. 1st ed. Serie Conferencias y Textos 16. Santa Fé: Universidad Nacional del Litoral, 1940.
- Gutiérrez, Ramón. “Notas sobre organización artesanal en el Cusco durante la colonia.” *Histórica* III, no. 1 (1979): 1-15.
- Kubler, George. “On the colonial extinction of the motifs of pre-Columbian art.” In *Essays in pre-Columbian art and archaeology*, edited by Samuel Kirkland Lothrop, 14-34. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961.
- Luhmann, Niklas. *Art as a Social System*. Translated by Eva M. Knodt. Crossing Aesthetics. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000.
- . “Das Kunstwerk und die Selbstreproduktion der Kunst.” In *Schriften zu Kunst und Literatur*, edited by Niels Werber, 139-188. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2008.
- . “Evolution und Geschichte.” In *Soziologische Aufklärung*, 2:150-169. 2nd ed. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1982.
- Martín González, Juan José. *El Artista en la Sociedad Española del siglo XVII*. Madrid, 1984.

- Mesa, José de. "La influencia de Flandes en la pintura del Area Andina." *Revista de Historia de América*, no. 117 (June 1994): 61-82.
- . "La pintura cuzqueña (1540-1821)." *Cuadernos de arte colonial* I, no. 4 (1988): 5-42.
- Mesa, José de, and Teresa Gisbert. "Determinantes del llamado estilo mestizo y sus alcances en América; breve consideración del término." In *Actas y Memorias del Congreso Internacional de Americanistas XXXVII - 1966*, 3:219-232. República Argentina: Librart, 1968.
- . "El Arte del Siglo XVII en Perú y Bolivia." In *Arte iberoamericano desde la colonización a la Independencia*, 2:23-128. 2nd ed. Summa Artis. Historia General del Arte XIX. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1985.
- . "El Baroco Tardío del Siglo XVIII en Perú y Bolivia." In *Arte iberoamericano desde la colonización a la Independencia*, 2:457-570. 2nd ed. Summa Artis. Historia General del Arte XIX. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1985.
- . *Escultura virreinal en Bolivia*. La Paz: Academia Nacional de Ciencias de Bolivia, 1972.
- . *Historia de la pintura Cuzqueña [Ed. 1]*. 1st ed. Bueno Aires: Instituto de Arte Americano e Investigaciones Estéticas, 1962.
- . *Historia de la Pintura Cuzqueña [Ed. 2]*. 2 vols. 2nd ed. Lima: Fundación Augusto N. Wiese, Banco Wiese, 1982.
- . *Holguín y la pintura virreinal en Bolivia*. La Paz: Libr. Ed. Juventud, 1977.
- . "La pintura cuzqueña." *Armitano Arte* 10 (1986): 81-94.
- . "Lo indígena en el arte hispanoamericano." *Boletín de Centro de Investigaciones Históricas y Estéticas* 12 (1971): 32-38.
- . "Pintura virreinal en Bolivia." *Mundo hispánico* 27, no. 318 (1974): 40-45.
- . "Renacimiento y manierismo en la arquitectura "mestiza"." *Boletín de Centro de Investigaciones Históricas y Estéticas* I, no. 3 (1965): 9-44.
- Mujica Pinilla, Ramón. "Arte e identidad: las raíces culturales del barroco peruano." In *El Barroco Peruano*, 1:1-57. Colección Arte y Tesoros del Perú. Lima: Banco de Crédito, 2002.
- Palm, Erwin Walter. "La ciudad colonial como centro de irradiación de las escuelas arquitectónicas y pictóricas." *Boletín de Centro de Investigaciones Históricas y Estéticas*, no. 14 (1972): 25-30.

- Prak, Maarten. "Guilds and the Development of the Art Market during the Dutch Golden Age." *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 30, no. 3/4 (2003): 236-251.
- Quiroz, Francisco. *Gremios, razas y libertad de industria : Lima colonial*. Lima: Facultad de Ciencias Sociales, Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, 1995.
- Rodríguez G. de Ceballos, Alfonso. "'Trampantojos a lo divino': íconos pintados de Cristo y de la virgen a partir de imágenes de culto en América meridional." In *Actas III Congreso Internacional del Barroco Americano*, 24-33. Sevilla: Universidad Pablo de Olavide, 2001.
- <http://www.upo.es/depa/webdhuma/areas/arte/actas/3cibi/pagina02.htm>.
- Samanez Argumedo, Roberto. "Las portadas retablo en el barroco cusqueño." In *El Barroco Peruano*, 1:145-199. Arte y Tesoros del Perú. Lima: Banco de Crédito, 2002.
- Solá, Miguel. *Historia del arte hispano-americano: arquitectura, escultura, pintura y artes menores en la América española durante los siglos XVI, XVII y XVIII*. Editorial Labor, 1958.
- Soria, Martin S. *La pintura del siglo XVI en Sudamérica*. Buenos Aires: Instituto de Arte Americano e Investigaciones Estéticas, 1956.
- . "La pintura en el Cuzco y el Alto Perú 1550-1700." *Anales del Instituto de Arte Americano e Investigaciones Estéticas* 12 (1959): 24-34.
- . "Painting and sculpture in Latin America from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century." *Year Book of the American Philosophical Society* (1952): 278-281.
- Stastny, Francisco. "Arte colonial." In *El arte en el Perú: obras en la colección del Museo de Arte de Lima*, 83-126. Lima: Museo de Arte de Lima, 2001.
- . *Breve Historia del arte en el Perú : la pintura precolombina, colonial y republicana*. Lima: Editorial Universo, 1967.
- . "Modernidad, ruptura y arcaísmo en el arte colonial." In *La presencia de la modernidad artística europea en América*, edited by Gustavo Curiel Méndez, Renato González Mello, and Juana Gutiérrez Haces, 3:939-954. México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, 1994.

- Stichweh, Rudolph. "Inklusion in Funktionssysteme der modernen Gesellschaft." In *Inklusion und Exklusion : Studien zur Gesellschaftstheorie*, 13-44. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2005.
- Ugarte Eléspuru, Juan Manuel. "Introducción a la Pintura Virreinal." In *Pintura Virreinal*, 11-40. Arte y Tesoros del Perú. Lima: Banco de Crédito del Perú, 1973.
- Vargas, Francisco. *Teresa Gisbert. Una Belleza Nueva : Conversaciones con Cristián Warnken*. Santiago, Chile: MW Producciones, 2003.  
<http://www.unabellezanueva.org/teresa-gisbert/>.
- Villanueva Urteaga, Horacio. "Nacimiento de la escuela cuzqueña de pintura." *Boletín del Archivo Departamental del Cuzco* 1 (1985): 11-13.
- Wuffarden, Luis Eduardo. "Las Escuelas Pictóricas Virreinales." In *Perú indígena y virreinal*, 80-87. SEACEX, 2005.





